

Spring 1-15-2001

ENG 4850-001: Caribbean Literature

Michael Loudon
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2001



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Loudon, Michael, "ENG 4850-001: Caribbean Literature" (2001). *Spring 2001*. 127.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2001/127

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2001 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2001 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Michael Loudon
 Spring 2001 (MWF 2:00-2:50 in CH202)
 Office: 314D CH
 Phone: 6312

Office Hours:
 MTWRF 11:00-12:00;
 or by appointment

English 4850: Caribbean Literature

Course Description: This course explores the development of West Indian literature from the synthesis of African, Amerindian, Asian and European experiences into a stabilizing oral tradition through the emergence of poetry and the short story to the novel and, recently, the formal epic *Omeros* by Derek Walcott. Among those issues that we shall examine are: the linguistic play among dialect, storytelling, "formal" and West Indian Standard English; colonial conflicts masked and revealed through literary production; indigenous cultural productions such as the Rastafarian movement and transformed cultural practices such as Carnival in Trinidad; and the relationship among African, African-American and "high" British traditions. (Though the Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and French mucked around in the islands, the British won, so we study by necessity what they have wrought; and, surely, why Americans might be instructed through their reading of West Indian literature.) Our sense of literature shall be broad enough to include myth, lyrics from reggae and calypso songs, and contemporary storytelling as well as written texts.

Prerequisite: All students must have completed English 1002C or 1092C or the equivalent.

Course Format: I shall lecture more often at the onset of the course, gradually moving toward a balance between lecture and discussion and eventually arriving, depending on your engagement, at seminar-style discussion in which your arguments with each other dominate the dynamic in the classroom. Please feel free to ask for clarification, raise questions or offer comments during the course of any lecture and discussion.

Course Texts:

S. Brown, M. Morris and G. Rohlehr, ed. *Voiceprint: An Anthology of Oral and Related Poetry from the Caribbean*. Longman, 1989.
 Paula Burnett, ed. *Caribbean Verse in English*. Penguin, 1986.
 Wilson Harris, *The Palace of the Peacock*
 Earl Lovelace, *The Dragon Can't Dance*
 Roger Mais, *Black Lightning*
 Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*
 V. S. Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas*
 Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems*
 -----, *Remembrance and Pantomime*
 -----, *Omeros*

Short stories (handouts):

Earl Lovelace, "Shoemaker Arnold"
 V. S. Naipaul, "The Night-Watchman's Occurrence Book"
 Jean Rhys, "I Used to Live Here Once"
 -----, "Let Them Call It Jazz"
 Sam Selvon, "Cane Is Bitter"
 Olive Senior, "Country of the One-Eyed God"
 -----, "Do Angels Wear Brassieres?"

(Additional handouts will be forthcoming throughout the course, so please check with me should you be absent from class.)

Requirements and Grading:

- 1) Careful preparation, diligent reading and enthusiastic involvement in classes; quick reading quizzes as necessary--the lowest score dropped when they are averaged (20%)
- 2) Journal of reading responses--done before class, after class, or both but a response to each text or topic to culminate in 45-50 pages of engaged commentary (20%)
- 3) Critical essay, 8-10 pages (30%)
- 4) Final essay examination (30%)

Graduate credit:

Those students enrolled in 4850 for graduate credit will--in addition to the requirements above--be expected to provide the following:

a second critical essay (6-8 pages), the two to be split 20% and 10%

OR, assume leadership for two class discussions, including the preparation of annotated bibliographies of research materials, grading to be split between discussion/preparation (10%) and the essay (20%)

All graduate students should notify me of their intention with respect to graduate credit by the middle of February.

General Policies:

Grading Standards: I shall follow the EIU English Department Guidelines, distributed in class. In all cases, I shall use a plus and minus system to distinguish, say, a high B from a low one.

Attendance: I do take roll and I evaluate attendance only indirectly in the context of your participation in the course (20%).

Conference: These are at your request unless I ask to see you. Please ask for help as soon as you feel you need it; please don't wait until the last couple of weeks of class. I shall try to speak with each of you at least once during the course.

Submission of work: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, titled and indicate the following: name, date, course and section number, and assignment number. Journals, exercises and quizzes must be legible.

Late Essays: For each day that the essay is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an A essay due on Friday will be an F by the next Thursday. If there are particular difficulties, please see me.

Plagiarism:**The English Department Policy**

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If I discover an act of plagiarism, I shall exercise the right to the fullest extent possible. (See the Handbook, pp. 505-518, for a further discussion of what constitutes plagiarism and how to integrate properly your material from sources.)

Academic Dishonesty:

Obviously, any act of cheating other than plagiarism will also carry an academic penalty, that to be determined by Judicial Affairs, depending upon the dishonest act and the circumstances.

Michael Loudon
Spring 2001 (MWF 2:00-2:50 in CH202)
Office: 314D CH
Phone: 6312

Office Hours:
MTWRF 11:00-12:00;
or by appointment

Syllabus for English 4850: Caribbean Literature

January

- M 8: Introduction
W 10: Key Issues in West Indian Literature: The Legacy of Columbus (I)
Voiceprint (VP), "Introduction"; Caribbean Verse (CV), "Introduction"
(xxiii-xliii); CV, Seymour (168-69)
F 12: (continued)
M 15: King's Birthday--No class
W 17: Key Issues in West Indian Literature: The Legacy of Columbus (II)
CV: complete "Introduction"; "Oral Tradition" (1-12); Louise Bennett
(31-38); VP: Legend... and Folk Song (24-67)
F 19: (continued)
M 22: West Indians and Their Language (I)
CV: "Oral Tradition" (13-96)
W 24: West Indians and Their Language (II)
VP: "Calypso" (124-145)
F 26: (continued)
M 29: The West Indian Short Story (I)
Sam Selvon, "Cane Is Bitter" and "My Girl and the City"
Earl Lovelace, "Shoemaker Arnold"
Willie Chen, "The Stickfighter"
V. S. Naipaul, "The Night-Watchman's Occurrence Book"
W 31: The West Indian Short Story (II)
Jean Rhys, "I Used to Live Here Once" & "Let Them...Jazz"
Olive Senior, "Country..." and "Do Angels..."

February

- F 2: The West Indian Short Story (III) (readings continued)
M 5: Earl Lovelace, *The Dragon Can't Dance*; Carnival in Trinidad (video)
W 7: (continued)
F 9: (continued)
M 12: Roger Mais, *Black Lightning*
W 14: (continued)
F 16: Lincoln's Birthday--No class
M 19: Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*
W 21: (continued)
F 23: (continued)
M 26: The Poetry of Edward Kamau Brathwaite (selections TBA)
W 28: (continued)
March
F 2: (continued)
M 5: Calypso songs (recordings) and reggae lyrics (recordings)
W 7: Calypso performance (video)
F 9: More reggae...The Rastafarians

Spring Break

M 19: V. S. Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas*
W 21: (continued)
F 23: (continued)

M 26: Wilson Harris, *The Palace of the Peacock*
W 28: (continued)
F 30: (continued)

April

M 2: The Poetry of Derek Walcott (selections TBA)
W 4: (continued)
F 6: (continued)

M 9: Walcott, selected poems
W 11: (continued)
F 13: (continued)

M 16: Walcott, *Pantomime*
W 18: (continued)
F 20: Walcott, *Omeros*

M 23: (continued)
W 25: (continued)
F 27: (continued)

Final Examination: